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## Go West in Fashion

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# Go West ... in fashion

by Gwen Olson

Technical Journalism Junior

**F**RONTIER FASHIONS are pushing East to bring color and comfort to your wardrobe.

Today you can wear the squaw dress in more brilliant colors than the Indians could create with berry juices and animal dyes. In black or white, pastels or bright yellow, blue green and orange, a squaw dress is attractive and comfortable.

The modern styling of the basic squaw dress dictates a fitted blouse tucked snugly under a shirred and flaring skirt, which is sometimes 10 yards around. The full skirt is often controlled by wide bands of rick-rack to give a tiered effect. A colorful border of rick-rack on both the skirt and blouse is the most common decorative detail.

## Formal squaw dresses

Many styles of the squaw dress are authentic; however, several have strayed far from the reservations—for instance, the strapless squaw gown. Dresses of corduroy and velveteen are dramatic deviations from the usual fabrics. For formal wear you can choose sheer, limp cottons, or silks, glistening with metallic threads.

For variety, the rick-rack detail is replaced by beaded work, leather, painted motifs and braid. The British introduced beads to the Indians, but the colorful beaded work is considered typical of the native art. Geometrical painted designs are reminiscent of the old Indian symbols. Other patterns, such as a print of African dancers, are strictly creations from the commercial world.

The history of squaw dresses goes back to the covered wagon days when the frontier women gave cast off clothing to their Indian servants. The Indians perpetuated the squaw dress long after the fashions changed. Women of the Navaho and other South-western tribes still wear the dress, and it has been named for them.

## Western footwear

Moccasins and squaw boots in rainbow hues will match any squaw dress and almost give a barefoot feeling for lounging and sportswear. Perhaps you will like the extra softness and neutral color of untanned leather. Air-foam cushions in the soles are the white man's final touch that gives perfect walking comfort. A drawstring around the top of your

moccasins will mold the pliable leather to your foot, and the moccasins will always fit.

To enhance a western outfit you will want the true Indian jewelry of metal, beads and semi-precious stones. The Navahos excelled in the art of silver smithing, which they learned from the Incas. They combined the silver with stones they mined, such as turquoise, and created necklaces, earrings and bracelets in order to wear their wealth. Copper jewelry is more typical of the northern Indians of the Middle West. The copper and earthy-colored enameled bear claw jewelry is a popular style no matter how savage or refined it looks.

The cowboy also left his brand on fashion in the

(continued on page 11)

Colorful bands of rick-rack give a tiered effect to the full skirt of this squaw dress modeled by Joan Redman, H. Ec. Sr.



sult, maybe the trip will be longer or better. If you like the out-of-doors, you can camp out, saving hotel and food expenditures. Picnic lunches are extra fun and informal relaxation on a trip. Instead of stopping for snacks, many people take fruit or cookies to nibble on during the day which satisfy them until mealtime. The less the traveling expenses are, the more available at the destination.

### Where to stay

If summer school is included on your agenda, write soon for catalogs and general information. Address your letters to the Registrar of the college or university in which you are interested. Inquire about the opportunities of studying in special schools or abroad when visiting your dean or counselor. Also, consult the bulletin board in the library.

Of course, money is needed to travel or go to summer school. You can work now if you have time. Perhaps you have worked during the summer. Saving 50c or \$1.00 a week during winter and spring adds up to a significant sum by vacation time.

With all this planning and formulating for your summer, you won't have a minute to get that middle-of-winter gloom. And don't forget to include your friends in your dreams and fancies. They will have helpful ideas and will keep you smiling through the long, cold winter. You can all have June in January.

## Go West

(Continued from page 7)

forms of the frontier shirts, wrangler jeans and the broad, tooled leather belt. Western store clerks and shoppers often go in this casual costume and save dresses for special occasions.

Most Indian styles reproduced in contemporary fashions originated in the Southwestern tribes mainly the Navahos. These tribes are located near the Mexican border in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, and are part of the Pueblo Indians.

Arizona, as a typical Western state, has experienced a boom in the fashion industry during the last five years. Many designers retired in the desert, but were so inspired by the surroundings they began creating again and set up new business. A great variety of Western wear is available because there are many of these small firms.

Two opinions are prevalent about this moving market. Western designers feel the frontier fashions are a growing trend; and since the comfortable styles have remained in fashion a long time, they are more than a fad. The Eastern designers are not convinced these casual styles are here to stay.

You can help forge the fashion frontier and enjoy Western comfort and color in your wardrobe. To obtain authentic Indian dress made on the national Indian reservations, write the Department of the Interior to learn where authorized specialty shops are located.

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